What is claimed is:

1   1. A method of indirectly forwarding a communication from a sender to a recipient where

2   an old address for the recipient is known or believed to be temporarily or

3   permanently invalid, by sending the communication to a forwarding service at an

4   address different from that of the recipient, comprising, at the forwarding service,

5   the steps of:

6   a) receiving the communication;

7   b) looking up at least the old address in a database;

8   c) retrieving at least one second address from the database, which second

9   address is associated with the old address;

10   d) sending the communication to the second address.

2. The method of claim 1, in which the old address is sent to the forwarding service as part

          of the forwarding address.

3. The method of claim 1, in which the old address is a part of the communication, and

          further comprising the step, after step a, of extracting the old address from the

          communication.

1   4. The method of claim 1 in which the old address for the recipient is selected from a

2   group comprising: a telephone number, an e-mail address, a postal address, a

3   uniform resource locator, an IP address, an IP address plus at least one time and/or

4   date and/or duration, a file name, a file name plus a location, an instant messaging

5   ID, a pager ID, a personal digital assistant ID, a cellphone ID, a cable terminal ID,

6   a direct broadcast terminal ID, a telex number, a teletype number, and an online

7   chat user ID.

1   5. The method of claim 1 in which the second address is selected from a group

2   comprising: a telephone number, an e-mail address, a postal address, a uniform

3   resource locator, an IP address, a file name, a file name plus a location, an instant

4   messaging ID, a pager ID, a personal digital assistant ID, a cellphone ID, a cable

5   terminal ID, a direct broadcast terminal ID, a telex number, a teletype number, and

6   an online chat user ID.

7   6. The method of claim 1, in which the communication is selected from a group

8   comprising telephone calls, electronic mail messages, postal mail, instant

9   messaging communications, internet protocol communications, web pages,

10   computer file transfer protocols, video transmissions, paging transmissions,

11   personal digital assistant transmissions, cellphone transmissions, cable

12   transmissions, direct broadcast transmissions, telex and teletype communications,

13   and online chat transmissions.

1   7. The method of claim 1, in which there are more than one second address in the database

2   associated with the old address, and the retrieval step c further comprises the step

3   of selecting one of the new addresses based on selection criteria.

1   8. The method of claim 7, in which the selection criteria comprises a password supplied by

2   the sender.

1   9. The method of claim 7, in which the selection criteria comprises a time of day.

1   10. The method of claim 7, in which the selection criteria comprises a priority ranking

2   supplied by the recipient, and the second address returned is a second address

3   having the highest priority.

1   11. The method of claim 10, if a second address returned in step c is invalid, further

2   comprising the step of repeating step d with a next-higher priority second address

3   until a valid second address is found or all second addresses are returned.

1   12. The method of claim 1, in which there is more than one second address associated with

2   the old address, and step d is performed for more than one of the second addresses

3   associated with the old address.

1   13. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

2   if there is a password in the database associated with the new address, prior

3   to forwarding the communication requesting a password from the

4   sender;

5   receiving a password supplied by the sender;

6   comparing the password supplied by the sender to the password in the

7   database; and

8   only performing the sending step d if the comparison is successful.

1   14. The method of claim 1, if more than one second address is associated with the old

2   address, further comprising the steps, after step c, of:

3   sending a communication to the sender with identifying material associated

4   with the more than one second addresses retrieved in step c and

5   requesting the sender to choose from among the more than one

6   second addresses;

7   accepting a choice from the sender selecting at least one of the more than

8   one second addresses;

9   sending the communication to the selected at least one of the more than one

10   second addresses.

1   15. The method of claim 1, in which the at least one second address was registered by the

2   recipient.

1   16. The method of claim 15, in which the recipient periodically updates the at least one

2   second address.

1   17. The method of claim 16, in which the periodic updating is done automatically.

1   18. The method of claim 15, in which, in addition to registering at least one second

2   address, the recipient specifies at least one sender from whom the recipient does

3   not wish to receive communications, and the sending step d of the method further

4   comprises the step of not sending communications to the at least one sender

5   specified by the recipient.

1   19. The method of claim 15, in which, in addition to registering at least one second

2   address, the recipient specifies at least one sender from whom the recipient wishes

3   to receive communications, and the sending step d of the method further comprises

4   the step of sending communications only from the at least one sender specified by

5   the recipient.

1   20. The method of claim 1, in which the at least one second address was retrieved by the

2   forwarding service from a source other than the recipient.

1   21. The method of claim 1, in which the forwarding step (d) further comprises the step of

2   including additional information in the communication.

1   22. The method of claim 21, in which at least some of the additional information is

2   advertising.

1   23. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of sending a confirming

2   communication back to the sender.

3   24. The method of claim 23, in which the confirming communication comprises at least

4   the second address to which the communication was forwarded.

1   25. The method of claim 23, in which the confirming communication also comprises

2   additional information at least in the form of advertising.

1   26. The method of claim 1, in which the old address and at least one second address are

2   addresses in the same medium of communications.

1   27. The method of claim 1, in which the old address and at least one second address are

2   addresses in different media of communications.

1   28. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

2   counting the number of communications forwarded for a sender in a

3   selected time period; and

4   not forwarding communications if the sender sends more communications

5   to be forwarded during the selected time period than a selected

6   limit.

1   29. The method of claim 1, if the second address retrieved in step c is invalid, of using the

2   second address as an old address, and repeating the method from step b.

1   30. The method of claim 1, in which the communication is sent to the forwarding service

2   by a server to which the communication was sent by the sender.

1   31. The method of claim 30, in which the server is associated with the sender, and the mail

2   server automatically sends the communication to the forwarding service when the

3   communication is returned as undeliverable.

1   32. The method of claim 30, in which the server is a mail server associated with the old

2   address associated with the recipient, and the mail server automatically sends the

3   communication to the forwarding service when the mail server cannot deliver the

4   communication to the old address.

1   33. A method of sending a communication to a recipient when an old address for the

2   recipient is known or believed to be temporarily or permanently invalid,

3   comprising the step of sending the communication to a forwarding service at an

4   address different from that of the recipient.

1   34. The method of claim 33 in which the old address for the recipient is selected from a

2   group comprising: a telephone number, an e-mail address, a postal address, a

3   uniform resource locator, an IP address, an IP address plus at least one time and/or

4   date and/or duration, a file name, a file name plus a location, an instant messaging

5   ID, a pager ID, a personal digital assistant ID, a cellphone ID, a cable terminal ID,

6   a direct broadcast terminal ID, a telex number, a teletype number, and an online

7   chat user ID.

1   35. The method of claim 33, in which the old address is sent to the forwarding service as

2   part of the forwarding address.

1   36. The method of claim 33, further comprising the steps of:

2   a) the forwarding service receiving the communication;

3   b) the forwarding service looking up at least the old address in a database;

4   c) the forwarding service retrieving at least one second address from the

5   database, which second address is associated with the old address;

6   d) the forwarding service sending the communication to the second address.

1   37. The method of claim 36, in which the old address is a part of the communication, and

2   further comprising the step, after step a, of the forwarding service extracting the

3   old address from the communication.

1   38. The method of claim 36 in which the second address is selected from a group

2   comprising: a telephone number, an e-mail address, a postal address, a uniform

3   resource locator, an IP address, a file name, a file name plus a location, an instant

4   messaging ID, a pager ID, a personal digital assistant ID, a cellphone ID, a cable

5   terminal ID, a direct broadcast terminal ID, a telex number, a teletype number, and

6   an online chat user ID.

7   39. The method of claim 36, in which the communication is selected from a group

8   comprising telephone calls, electronic mail messages, postal mail, instant

9   messaging communications, internet protocol communications, web pages,

10   computer file transfer protocols, video transmissions, paging transmissions,

11   personal digital assistant transmissions, cellphone transmissions, cable

12   transmissions, direct broadcast transmissions, telex and teletype communications,

13   and online chat transmissions.

1   40. The method of claim 36, in which there are more than one second address in the

2   database associated with the old address, and the retrieval step c further comprises

3   the step of selecting one of the new addresses based on selection criteria.

1   41. The method of claim 40, in which the selection criteria comprises a password supplied

2   by the sender.

1   42. The method of claim 40, in which the selection criteria comprises a time of day.

43. The method of claim 40, in which the selection criteria comprises a priority ranking
   supplied by the recipient, and the second address returned is a second address
   having the highest priority.

44. The method of claim 43, if a second address returned in step c is invalid, further
   comprising the step of repeating step d with a next-higher priority second address
   until a valid second address is found or all second addresses are returned.

45. The method of claim 36, in which there is more than one second address associated
   with the old address, and step d is performed for more than one of the second
   addresses associated with the old address.

46. The method of claim 36, further comprising the steps of:

   if there is a password in the database associated with the new address, prior
      to forwarding the communication requesting a password from the
      sender;

   receiving a password supplied by the sender;

   comparing the password supplied by the sender to the password in the
      database; and

   only performing the sending step d if the comparison is successful.

47. The method of claim 36, if more than one second address is associated with the old
   address, further comprising the steps, after step c, of:

   sending a communication to the sender with identifying material associated
      with the more than one second addresses retrieved in step c and
      requesting the sender to choose from among the more than one
      second addresses;

   accepting a choice from the sender selecting at least one of the more than
      one second addresses;

9   sending the communication to the selected at least one of the more than one

10   second addresses.

1   48. The method of claim 36, in which the at least one second address was registered by the

2   recipient.

1   49. The method of claim 48, in which the recipient periodically updates the at least one

2   second address.

1   50. The method of claim 49, in which the periodic updating is done automatically.

1   51. The method of claim 48, in which, in addition to registering at least one second

2   address, the recipient specifies at least one sender from whom the recipient does

3   not wish to receive communications, and the sending step d of the method further

4   comprises the step of not sending communications to the at least one sender

5   specified by the recipient.

1   52. The method of claim 48, in which, in addition to registering at least one second

2   address, the recipient specifies at least one sender from whom the recipient wishes

3   to receive communications, and the sending step d of the method further comprises

4   the step of sending communications only from the at least one sender specified by

5   the recipient.

1   53. The method of claim 36, in which the at least one second address was retrieved by the

2   forwarding service from a source other than the recipient.

1   54. The method of claim 36, in which the forwarding step (d) further comprises the step of

2   including additional information in the communication.

1   55. The method of claim 54, in which at least some of the additional information is

2   advertising.

1   56. The method of claim 36, further comprising the step of sending a confirming

2   communication back to the sender.

3   57. The method of claim 56, in which the confirming communication comprises at least
4   the second address to which the communication was forwarded.

1   58. The method of claim 56, in which the confirming communication also comprises
2   additional information at least in the form of advertising.

1   59. The method of claim 36, in which the old address and at least one second address are
2   addresses in the same medium of communications.

1   60. The method of claim 36, in which the old address and at least one second address are
2   addresses in different media of communications.

1   61. The method of claim 36, further comprising the steps of:

2   counting the number of communications forwarded for a sender in a
3   selected time period; and

4   not forwarding communications if the sender sends more communications
5   to be forwarded during the selected time period than a selected
6   limit.

1   62. The method of claim 36, if the second address retrieved in step c is invalid, of using
2   the second address as an old address, and repeating the method from step b.

1   63. The method of claim 36, in which the communication is sent to the forwarding service
2   by a server to which the communication was sent by the sender.

1   64. The method of claim 63, in which the server is associated with the sender, and the mail
2   server automatically sends the communication to the forwarding service when the
3   communication is returned as undeliverable.

1   65. The method of claim 63, in which the server is a mail server associated with the old
2   address associated with the recipient, and the mail server automatically sends the
3   communication to the forwarding service when the mail server cannot deliver the
4   communication to the old address.

1   66. A method of forwarding communications from a sender to a recipient over a network

2   where the recipient has an address which is dynamically assigned, comprising the

3   steps of:

4   a) maintaining a database having a plurality of entries, each entry

5   representing a session during which the recipient was connected and

6   storing at least the address dynamically assigned while the recipient

7   was connected and the time during which the recipient was

8   connected using that address;

9   b) when a recipient connects, creating an entry in the database and linking

10   the currently assigned address to an entry in the database for a

11   previous connection;

12   c) accepting a forwarding request from a sender, comprising at least an

13   address and a time representing a previous connection associated

14   with the recipient;

15   d) using the address and time from step c, finding the entry in the database

16   which represents the previous connection;

17   e) returning the currently assigned address for the recipient which was

18   linked to the entry found in step d.

1   67. The method of claim 66, further comprising the step of:

2   f) connecting the communication to the recipient.

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